

No one wants to use the word “recession,” yet millions of American families are feeling recession-like pangs. They feel it every time they go to the gas pump or to the grocery check-out line. Prices are rising –paychecks are not.

Instead of crafting a budget that sets America on a healthy economic track, President Bush once again sent Congress a four-inch thick pile of paper that undermines pillars of long-term economic progress such as education and healthcare.

Case in point: Last month President Bush stood before the entire nation during his State of the Union address, and recycled the same old line about how the education of America’s children is a top priority of his. Yet I turn to his proposal and find budget cuts in education, when adjusted for inflation. Is that how we treat priorities such as our children and this country’s economic future?

Make no mistake about it, this country cannot remain economically competitive unless we have an educated labor force that can adapt to a marketplace that changes more quickly with every passing year. I find it ironic that the President proposes pumping more than \$650 billion into defense, while devoting only \$65 billion to education. In addition to that the President now wants another \$170 billion for his misguided war in Iraq.

The education of our children is the most important component for our country’s future. It is a national security issue. Why aren’t we willing to go to war for them?

I am willing to wage such a fight. Our children must not be left behind in favor of Bush’s military venture in Iraq. As a member of the Appropriations Committee I will do everything in my power to ensure that our nation’s children get every penny they need to succeed.

Within education, once again, during the State of the Union President Bush made a lot of noise about the so-called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, but then he dropped his five-pound budget proposal and underfunded once again what was supposed to be a flagship initiative. His budget calls for \$24.6 billion, far short of the nearly \$40 billion required to fully fund NCLB. What makes matters worse are the gimmicks and “fuzzy numbers” the Administration sprinkled through the

budget as a political smokescreen.

For example, President Bush surreptitiously claims this budget is on track to finally wipe out deficits. What he does not tell us is that it counts on revenues from the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) ensnaring tens of millions of people. When Democrats tried to do away last year with this creeping tax that would have roped in unintentionally millions of middle class Americans, President Bush threatened to veto it. He balked at the idea of off-setting the lost revenue by closing loopholes that millionaire hedge fund managers use to cloak their income. Congress managed to help the middle class with a one-year stopgap.

But this year once again, Bush's loyalties became obvious.

Now, he promises to balance the budget and keeping his tax cuts for the rich by placing the weight on America's middle class. His balanced budget forecast relies on the annual AMT revenues from millions of unintended Americans Congress saved last year. Worse yet, the number of people caught by the AMT, grows every year.

So, no taxes for the upper crust, taxes for the working majority, and voila, we have a balanced budget in 2012.

And the list goes on. Major cuts to Medicare and senior citizens to the tune of \$6 billion next year; cuts to the Department of Justice of more than \$20 billion; cuts to the Department of Transportation of more than \$11.5 billion.

This President squandered the surplus he received from the Clinton Administration when he took office. Now with this budget, he wants to fill in the holes by slashing the programs that help the elderly and the young. In his last year, he suddenly wants to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class while continuing to reduce taxes for the wealthy.

The President's proposed budget is irresponsible and wrong, and I will continue to do everything in my power to ensure that the federal government addresses our nation's important priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

